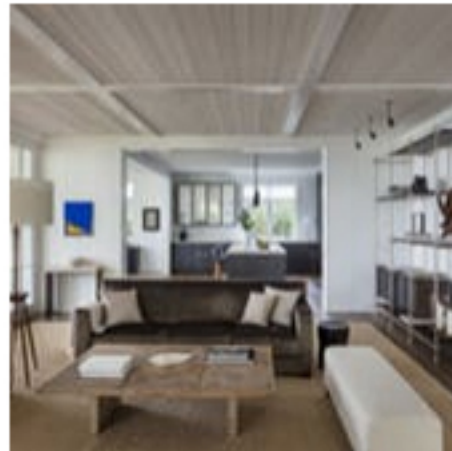
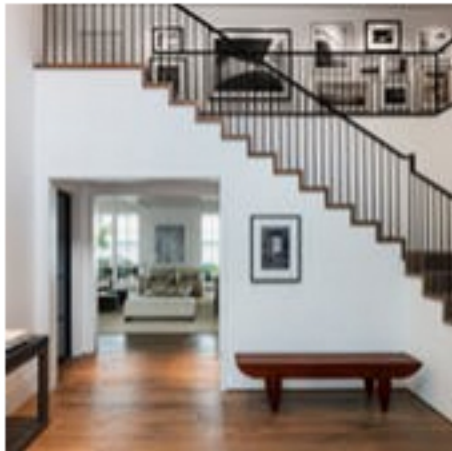
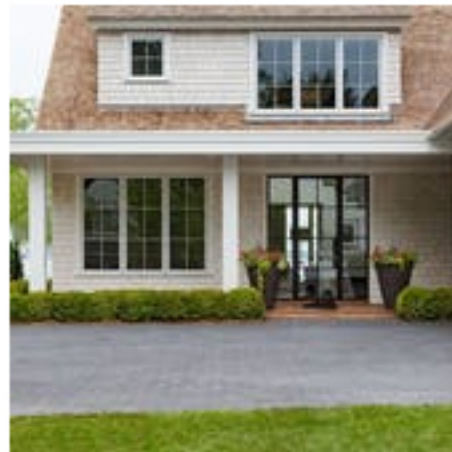


Homebuilder's beach house was designed for casual Lake Minnetonka living

The homeowners, who love to entertain, envisioned a beach house inspired by coastal cottages in the Hamptons.

By **Kim Palmer** Star Tribune | FEBRUARY 29, 2020 — 6:50PM

GALLERY  GRID



As a custom homebuilder, Steven Streeter sometimes gets calls from people seeking to sell their home as a potential building site.

One call became the catalyst for a new home for Streeter himself.

He and his wife, Robin Wettengel, were living in a house they'd built on Lake Minnetonka, in the quaint community of Cottagewood in Deephaven. The couple had no desire to leave. They love Cottagewood, with its little parks and iconic historic general store.

"You come over the bridge at the end of the day, and it feels like a resort," said Streeter.

And life on the lake was idyllic. "We've always loved the peace that water gives you," said Wettengel.

Then their next-door neighbors called, wondering if Streeter might have a client interested in buying their house, an older home that had various additions.



Paul Crosby Cottagewood Beach House

Steven talked with his wife, who was intrigued by the idea of building again.

"Our house next door was too big," she said. "And I wanted something more casual, more beachy," with informal gathering spaces and no-fuss finishes. "I said, 'I'm in.'"

His firm, Streeter, would build the house. But first they needed someone to design it. Streeter reached out to Peterssen/Keller Architecture, with whom he'd worked on projects for

mutual clients.

The site for the couple's new home was a bit tricky.

"It's a very narrow lot, typical of lots in Cottagewood," said principal Gabriel Keller. "How do you make it feel welcoming?"

There was 75 feet of shoreline but the house could be no more than 50 feet wide, because of setback requirements. And while the couple wanted a smaller house than the one they had, they still wanted a fairly sizable one. The couple entertain frequently, and their teenage son also likes to have groups of friends over.

"We've always had a house with kids in it," said Wettengel. "Our house is the one the kids hang out at."

The couple envisioned a beach house inspired by coastal cottages in the Hamptons.

“Steven wanted the home to feel modest and understated, like a Hamptons cabin,” said Keller. “Not ornate — simple and elemental.”

The house has a traditional gabled form and cedar shake shingles, “but with modern attitude,” Keller said, including a modern flat roof overhang that wraps around one side of the house. A welcoming front porch transitions to a deck that also wraps around the side, drawing visitors around the house and to the lake.

The front door also is modern — a blackened steel frame with large glass panels. “It draws you to it, and you can see the lake beyond,” Keller said.

Blackened steel was used throughout the house — on the staircase, the door frames for the glass doors in the great room and also around the limestone hearth.

“The material palette stayed simple and carried through the whole house,” said architect Bob Le Moine.

Room for a pantry

Maximizing square footage was another goal of the design, said Le Moine.

Because the house was smaller than the couple’s previous one, they opted for multifunctional spaces.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

What: New “beach cottage”-inspired home on Lake Minnetonka in Deephaven’s Cottagewood community.

Size: About 4,400 square feet of living space above ground, plus about 1,600 on the lower level.

Architectural design team: Principal Gabriel Keller and project architect Bob Le Moine, Peterssen/Keller Architecture.

Builder: Streeter.

Interior designer: Nada Bibi Interiors.

Landscape design: Travis Van Liere, tvls.

Decorative paint and plaster: Darril Otto, Otto Painting Design.

“There’s one dining area off the kitchen, as opposed to two [one for casual meals and another for more formal ones],” said Wettengel. “It works for our family.”

She did, however, want a butler’s pantry like they’d had in their previous home.

“We entertain a lot, and sometimes have caterers,” she said. “Steven said, ‘You’ll have to give up your pantry,’ but our wonderful architect made it work.”

The solution: pantry cabinets and a slim prep area are tucked behind the kitchen.

The home has that modern must-have, a mudroom, but with large expanses of glass so it feels like an enclosed breezeway connecting the kitchen and the garage.

“You can separate the two volumes and have an indoor/outdoor experience,” said Le Moine.

And instead of five bedrooms, as they had in their previous house, the couple now have three — an owners’ suite, a guest room and a suite for their teenage son above the garage with two built-in daybeds to accommodate sleepovers.

The lower level serves as their son’s “man cave,” including a media room with acoustical panels to block sound, a workout room and even a room to practice hockey shooting.

Room for art

Finding ways to make the most of the couple’s art collection was an integral part of the design process.

“In a modern home, it’s always a struggle to find places for art,” said Keller, thanks to today’s preferences for large windows and open spaces with few walls.

Instead of designing the house and then looking for places to display art, some key pieces of artwork drove the design from the beginning.

“Making room for their art collection was part of the program early on,” said Le Moine. “We composed spaces for the art.”

The second-floor hallway, visible from the front entry, serves as a gallery wall highlighting artworks. And the great room, which has walls and doors of glass overlooking the lake, has one solid wall section on the lake side, designed to display a large piece of favorite art photography.

That wall was a subject of much discussion during the project, according to Keller. At first, Streeter wanted an uninterrupted view of the lake. “I said, ‘We can frame that view.’ I had to convince him. He trusted me.”

Inside, the home has the casual beachy vibe the couple were seeking.

“There are more raw finishes, as opposed to shiny, perfect finishes,” said Wettengel.

The European oak flooring, for example, has knotholes and a matte-look oil finish. The great room’s walls are clad in tongue-and-groove siding installed with a nickel gap “for a cottage feel. It reads very calming,” said Le Moine.

Fir ceilings were given a paint treatment by artisan painter Darril Otto to create a look that evokes driftwood.

The light-filled great room contrasts with the dark cozy den, which is clad in shou sugi ban, a Japanese technique of charring wood that makes it extremely durable.

Using shou sugi ban for paneling (and figuring out how to finish it so that the charred wood wouldn't blacken your hand when you touched it) was one example of the collaborative problem-solving that made the project fun, said Keller.

"Designing a builder's home is incredibly satisfying because every detail was executed flawlessly," he said. "It's a joy to work on the creative end when you don't have to worry about the technical end."

Because Streeter knows the industry so well, "he knows the people who really care and want to make something special, and he lets them do it," Keller said. "It's one of those projects that's a perfect example of what collaboration can create — when everybody's allowed space to bring their best ideas."

Now that their home is complete, Streeter appreciates that it's "so livable, so easy" with "human-scale rooms."

And its casual, easygoing style has even changed the way they entertain, said Wettengel.

"Instead of dinner parties, it's more casual now — always a buffet." In nice weather, they and their guests gravitate to the covered back patio where they can enjoy the lake.

"We rarely dine inside all summer," she said. "A lot of candles, doors open, hear the music. ... We took the nice features from our other house and made them even better."

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